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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKISH ARMED FORCES DEPUTY AFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO EU, BUT TAKES SWIPES AT U.S., EU, AND DOMESTIC "OPPONENTS"

Classified By: Consul General David Arnett for Reasons 1.5 (b & d)

[11](#). (C) Summary: Declaring at a globalization conference that the Turkish military is not against Turkey's pursuit of EU membership, deputy chief of the TGS Buyukanit further qualified the military's stance with a series of reservations and an indirect but clear set of jabs at the U.S. End summary.

[12](#). (SBU) Opening a Turkish Armed Forces-sponsored symposium on globalization at the Military Academy in Istanbul on May 29, Turkish General Staff (TGS) deputy Yasar Buyukanit declared that the Turkish Armed Forces cannot be against the EU because the EU is the "ultimate condition" for realizing Ataturk's modernization targets. He went on to denounce claims that the Turkish military opposed European Union membership as an "unfair attack." He called for the EU to treat Turkey's "40-year old" membership application "without any prejudice." At the same time, Buyukanit denounced past foreign support for domestic terrorism (i.e., Kurdish separatism) by countries using the guise of "trying to teach us human rights." Buyukanit also warned those with "archaic and separatist goals" that EU membership could not be used as a means to advance their objectives.

[13](#). (SBU) In thinly-veiled criticism of the U.S. and Western Europe, Buyukanit criticized "developed" and "hegemonic" states for not being sensitive to local concerns in pursuing policies that "exploit ethnic diversities" and "damage social stability" in developing countries. While condemning terrorism, Buyukanit said that "powerful countries" must also pursue strategies that are in compliance with international law. Finally, in light of vast income disparities, developed countries should be less "stingy" in their approach to developing countries.

[14](#). (C) Amidst continuing speculation following remarks by NSC Secretary-General Kilinc and subsequent remarks by TGS Chief

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Ozkok, conference attendees (including many of Turkey's most prominent columnists, academics, and retired diplomats and generals) expected Buyukanit to deliver a message confirming the military's commitment to Turkey's EU membership. Although most appeared encouraged by his remarks, some of the attendees were unconvinced. Ilnur Cevik, editor and columnist for the English-language Turkish Daily News, pointed out to poloff that Buyukanit had given no specifics on the necessary steps that the military itself would have to take for Turkey to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria. One foreign analyst and long-time Turkey resident was particularly struck by the jabs at the U.S. In remarks to Pol Counselor in Ankara, leading commentator Cengiz Candar agreed with this latter assessment. Candar saw Buyukanit as using the EU-candidacy-related portion of his remarks (with support for EU candidacy couched in negative terms, i.e. the Armed Forces "cannot be against") as a mere lead-in to a criticism of the U.S. and a warning to domestic groups the military judges to be against Ataturkist principles.

[15](#). (U) Other columnists also picked up on the negative message: Sedat Ergin in centrist mass-circulation "Hurriyet" focused on Buyukanit's criticism of the U.S. and globalization; Himet Bila in Kemalist "Cumhuriyet" interpreted the remarks as a warning to the West and a defiant statement against those who want to see the Turkish military's influence wane.

[16](#). (C) Comment: lack of specifics and swipes at the U.S. and EU in Buyukanit's remarks have left many questions unanswered. Some of our Istanbul contacts worry that at a time when the TGS is making critical decisions about senior-level appointments, TGS Chief Ozkok appears to be more and more isolated. Hurriyet columnist Cuneyt Ulsever told poloff before the speech that he is worried about divisions within the top brass and thinks some anti-EU hard-liners may be looking for an "emergency" to justify extending in their

positions for another year.  
ARNETT